

**State Planning Office  
WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS  
Week ending January 18, 2008**

State law assigns four core duties to the State Planning Office that include: 1) conducting continuing economic analysis, including economic forecasting, 2) coordinating the development of the State's economy and energy resources with the conservation of its natural resources; 3) providing technical assistance to towns and regions; and 4) providing technical assistance to the Governor and Legislature by undertaking special studies and plans and preparing policy alternatives.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- Jan 22 **Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission**  
9:30 am - 1:30 pm - Room 228 in the State House  
**CONTACT:** David Douglass at 287-1478 or [david.douglass@maine.gov](mailto:david.douglass@maine.gov)
- Jan 23 **SPO Budget Briefing to State and Local Government Committee**  
3:30 pm – Room 216, Cross Office Building
- Jan 28 **SPO Presentation to State and Local Government Committee**  
Government Evaluation Act Review  
11:00 am – Room 216, Cross Office Building  
View SPO's GEA report on-line at:  
<http://www.maine.gov/spo/docs/gea2007/index.php>
- Jan 30 **Quality of Place Working Group on Regional Asset-Based Development**  
1:00 pm - 4:30 pm - Old Federal Building, Downtown Augusta, MDF Conference Room  
**CONTACT:** Linda LaPlante at 287-6077 or [linda.c.laplante@maine.gov](mailto:linda.c.laplante@maine.gov)

**DIRECTOR'S POLICY AND MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**Quality of Place council discusses workforce issues.** The Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place had a productive meeting and conversation with Chancellor Pattenau, President Fitzsimmons, and Commissioner Fortman on January 15. The panel and council discussed ways to gear curricula and other educational opportunities to support the workforce that will be needed to bolster Maine's quality of place. The council scheduled its next meetings as follows:

- Tuesday, February 26, 1-4:30 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the State Capitol; and (if needed)
- Tuesday, March 25, 1-4:30 at the PUC Hearing Room in Augusta

**CONTACT:** Sue Inches at 287-2989 or [sue.inches@maine.gov](mailto:sue.inches@maine.gov)

**MAINE COASTAL PROGRAM**

**Goochs Beach study completed.** The Maine Healthy Beaches Program (MHB) and the Maine Geological Survey (MGS) have completed the current and circulation pattern study for Goochs Beach in Kennebunk. Because of the chronically high bacteria counts found at Goochs during swimming season, we conducted the study to determine zones of contribution and 'hot spots' for pollutants. This spring we will meet with the town and local volunteers to discuss what we've found and what we can do to clean up identified pollution sources and better predict unsafe swimming conditions. **CONTACT: Paula Thomson at 287-1482 or [paula.thomson@maine.gov](mailto:paula.thomson@maine.gov).**

## **LAND USE PLANNING PROGRAM**

**Northfield comprehensive plan consistent with Growth Management Act.** On January 15, proposed revisions to the draft Northfield comprehensive plan were found to have successfully addressed previously-identified inconsistencies with state law, thus resulting in a finding of consistency with the Growth Management Act. **CONTACT: Phil Carey at 287-3860 or [phil.carey@maine.gov](mailto:phil.carey@maine.gov).**

## **GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY**

**Heating fuel prices drop slightly.** The Office of Energy Independence and Security January 14, 2008, survey of home heating oil prices found the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be down by \$.01 since the last week at \$3.34 per gallon and \$1.11 higher than last year at this time. The price of WTI crude oil at the last close was down significantly from last week to \$92.69 per barrel. This is a major driver of refined product prices, including heating oil. As of January 4, New England (PADD1a) heating oil inventories stood at 9,126 thousand barrels, or 3,631 thousand barrels less than last year at this time.

The statewide kerosene price average is down by \$0.01 since last week at \$3.74 per gallon and \$1.11 higher than last year at this time. Today's propane price survey found the statewide average to be \$2.98 per gallon which is \$0.04 higher than last week and \$0.68 higher than last year at this time.

The record breaking warmth up and down the east coast over the last two weeks have allowed heating oil inventories to recover slightly from the historic lows we have seen lately and prices to abate just slightly. Over the last week crude oil prices have also fallen \$5-\$6 per barrel as speculators fear a recession will drive down the demand for oil in the US. **CONTACT: Ian Burnes at 287-8927 or [ian.burnes@maine.gov](mailto:ian.burnes@maine.gov)**